DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 033 738 LI 001 805

TITLE	Proceedings: 1st Annual NSLS Day (November 21, 1968).
INSTITUTION	North Suburban Library System, Morton Grove, Ill.
Pub Date	69
Note	20p.
EDRS Price	EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.10
Descriptors	Conference Reports, *Library Networks, Library Planning, Library Services, *Public Libraries, *Social Change, Sociocultural Patterns, *Suburban Environment, *Suburban Problems

Abstract

As a commemoration of the first anniversary of the North Suburban Library System (NSLS), a program on "The Public Library in a Changing Suburbia" was presented to the trustees and staff members of the NSLS libraries. This report includes a speech entitled "The Suburban Library in the Affluent Ghetto," presented by Kenneth R. Shaffer; reactions to the speech by Arthur Curley and Peter Hiatt; the questions of the members of the audience; and the answers and comments of the speaker and reactors. (JB)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

LI 001805

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED033738

Proceedings . . . .

1st ANNUAL

NSLS DAY

November 21, 1968

LI 001805

North Suburban Library System
5814 Dempster Street
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053
1969

NSLS DAY, 1968

In order to celebrate a birthday, we first must have a birthdate. But unlike a child, the North Suburban Library System had many choices of dates. The date which commanded the most support was July 1, the effective date for the receipt of that essential to system life, money. However, this summer time date, and one close to the major summer holiday at that, did not suggest itself as a popular time for a system wide commemoration. A more favorable time was November 4, the day in Springfield, in 1966, when Paul Powell, Secretary of State and State Librarian, presented Paul Gorby, President of the System with the appropriately engraved (but surprisingly undated) charter for the System. And so we --- the Board of Directors, the Regional Library Advisory Council, and the NSLS staff, chose charter day, November 4, as the System's birthday for the commemorative purposes which were initiated in 1968. (The NSLS office was in the process of organization during 1967, and was not prepared to mark formally the anniversary that year.

For this first commemoration, referred to as NSLS Day, 1968, and which for the convenience of the participants we scheduled for November 21, instead of the specific day, we decided to present a program on "The Public Library in a Changing Suburbia" for the trustees and staff members of NSLS libraries. In order to accommodate to the work schedules of as many trustees and staff members as possible, provide a choice of place of attendance, and house the potential attendance, the planners decided to have two identical programs, one of which was presented at 2 p.m. at the Evanston Public Library and the other at 8 p.m. at the Cook Memorial Library, Libertyville.

The program outline for NSLS Day, 1968, and the speech of Mr. Shaffer, the reactions of Mr. Curley and Dr. Hiatt, the questions of the members of the audience, and the answers and comments of the speaker and the reactors at both program sites are given in this publication.

In terms of the size of the attendance, the degree of involvement of the audience, and the after-the-program reports, NSLS Day, 1968, was a success. For this, and on behalf of the System, I thank all those who had a part in the program; the Executive Committee of the Regional Library Advisory Council, which assisted greatly in the planning; Donald Wright, who arranged for the speaker and the reactors; the Evanston and Cook Memorial Libraries for their hospitality; and to the members of the NSLS staff who prepared and put out the posters, followed the elephants, and took down the big tent.

The NSLS is publishing and distributing this record of the substance of NSLS Day, 1968, in the hopes that those trustees and staff members of member libraries who were present will review the thought provoking comments of Messrs. Shaffer, Curley, and Hiatt and those not present will have an opportunity to share with us the content of this significant program. But to review or to read this record is not enough; it could well be used by your library board and staff as the basis for a series of continuing dialogues on the questions raised here for suburban public libraries.

Robert R. McClarren
System Director, NSLS
June 30, 1969

THE SUBURBAN LIBRARY IN THE AFFLUENT GHETTO

by

Kenneth R. Shaffer

Director, School of Library Science

Simmons College

When Mr. Wright wrote in late summer, inviting me to speak to you, he asked that I "address my thinking on the changing patterns of the suburban scene and the effect that these changes will have on libraries." I must confess that I accepted his invitation with a good deal of excitement and alacrity because it seems to me that the next great social and economic upheaval in the United States will occur in Suburbia, and also because this is an area that has had increasing personal interest and study on my part.

Some of us can remember the long and continuing economic and social struggle that began with the Great Depression and continued on until the late 40's and 50's in rural America. It was characterized by poverty, cultural and educational deprivation, and finally by a great exodus of many rural Americans from the farms to the cities. I realize that I take some risk in this part of the country in saying that some of the problems of rural America seem at least to have been solved to the point where they no longer represent the most crucial point of our attention as a nation. The economies and efficiencies of larger units of agricultural production, farm mechanization, increasingly more profitable means of distribution of farm products, and some of our great public programs which have modernized both farming and farm life have not only helped resolve the crisis of rural America but, I think, show the ways where rural America can find an equitable share of the good life.

And now it is the turn of our great cities, which just a few years ago were the islands of hope for all of those who came to them, to become the centers of our social, economic and moral crisis. Because the agony of urban America cannot in all of its various and horrendous aspects be far from our minds for very long, I need not describe it in this paper. The important thing to note is that just as in the case of rural America earlier, urban poverty, education, discrimination, and violence now occupy the great part of our public concern. Once the focus is upon this crisis, we can only have lost our hope in free America if we do not believe that the problems of discrimination, housing, poverty, public education, and all of the other ills of our great metropolitan centers cannot and will not be solved. Many of the solutions are yet undiscovered, but certainly there has never been a focus of greater national concern bringing both resources and ingenious and creative thinking to a national problem.

The public library movement in recent decades mirrors this history. The crisis in rural America initiated our great programs of library regionalization, federal and state financial aid, and an increasingly strong structure of federal and state assistance to equalize access to more and more adequate library resources and services. And now in the

cities our metropolitan libraries struggle with the problems of the illiterate and near-illiterate, the poor, the discriminated, and all of those misery and frustration have reached the point where they have all but closed the gates of the walls that surround their ghettos. In the metropolitan crisis we, as librarians, have not begun to find the answers and while more and more resources by way of federal funds are pouring into projects of urban renovation, I hope that I can say with some authority that the public library at this point in large part lacks the know-how, the programs, and above all, the kind of personnel to begin the attack and make a constructive contribution to the resolution of the urban situation. Across the nation we are only beginning to tear out the rotted core of our city slums to provide a physical environment from which moral and cultural renewal can follow. Surely our urban crisis will be with us for many years if not decades, and surely this is the time for all librarians but particularly for our library schools to prepare a base of research and professional education that will provide library personnel who have the particular sociological and psychological insights to deal effectively with public library programs in the inner city.

I have entitled this paper "The Suburban Library in the Affluent Ghetto" with certainly no intention to offend but rather to point up Suburbia as our next area of crisis. Just as the problems of rural America and now urban America were isolated until they festered into great social and economic tragedies, I have the distinct feeling that the walls of isolation are now being built up around Suburbia and this is in large part my theme. While perhaps aware of the state of mind of the Negro and other minority groups within our cities, the upheaval in student and faculty relations in our universities, the desperation of the poor, fundamental changes in our attitudes towards sex -- the revolution against the traditional social and economic values of the establishment -- Suburbia does not seem to feel a part of them. Just as rural America was once the haven of hope and security only to be followed by the city, suburban America psychologically isolates itself from the realities of riots, the burning of our cities, violence, crime, and vast changes in our religious, social, and educational mores. When the cataclysm spills over into Suburbia as it sometimes does, the response is disbelief, rejection, and horror, and the reaction is all too frequently to turn the head the other way -- or to call in the police. In keeping its eyes closed to the social and economic revolution about it, Suburbia wills its own sterility as far as contributing to the mainstream of American life. The walls which are being built around the suburb may be the next to tumble down in spasms of violence and crisis as Suburbia is reintegrated into American life.

I have not, I think, used the word "ghetto" with reference to Suburbia thoughtlessly or inadvertently. Ghettos are determined by economic, religious, social, and ethnic necessities -- or, as in the case of the suburb -- aspiration. Ghetto walls are just as high and just as impenetrable in the Negro slum where their function is to keep the Negro in as in the suburb where their function may be to keep others out. The point is that, however the ghetto comes into being, it cuts off communication, understanding, equity -- even sympathy.

I should like to relate this over-long preface to some specifics and to look at the American suburb first as a social phenomenon. As I studied the growth of the towns and cities that make up your fine library system in Northern Illinois, I was struck as anyone must be, by its tremendous aggregate population growth since the 1940's and, indeed, as I looked at the projections for the population of your communities for the coming 25 years, the human response can only be one of daze and bewilderment. Looking back a few decades, we can see that the great impetus to the suburbs occurred first as an escape from the crowdedness, the increasing sordidness of our cities, and their decreasing ability to provide adequate public service -- especially public education -- for those who could afford better. A not unimportant aspect of the exodus from the cities to the suburbs was to avoid high urban tax rates resulting in public services of poor quality in favor of lower tax rates in less concentrated populations of Suburbia producing public services of higher quality. But while these were initial motivations, Suburbia soon developed its own particular set of problems. As the suburb became more populous and more costly in terms of public services -- again especially public schools -- new sets of values replaced earlier ones which were lost. Let me try to detail a few of the characteristics of the suburban community today:

-- The relative affluence of the middle class suburbanite is concomitant with relatively high levels of education on his part and an insistence on public services of high quality -- particularly public schools of excellence.

-- This same affluence has, generally speaking, encouraged large families, and anyone who is familiar with the population growth figures of the communities comprising this system might be fearful, to use the old cliche, to drink a glass of your water. Insistence on public services of high quality coupled with large families, plus the rapidity and extent of suburban population growth from the cities has increased costs of all public services: fire and police protection, streets, sewage, as well as oppressive increases in the cost of education. The result has frequently amounted to a higher tax burden than the one which the emigrating suburbanite originally tried to escape in the cities.

-- For a time the race against increasing population and increasing costs of public services to meet them were off-set by broadening the tax base through attracting new business and industry. This has become less and less meaningful, however, as competition between suburban communities reached a point of no return and as it became clear that new industries themselves attract cadres of new people who in turn require increased costs of public services. Some communities reached a stalemate of coveting new industries to broaden the tax base at the same time that employees needed to man them and who might not fit into the suburban image of itself, were unwanted.

-- In an effort to preserve green spaces and also in an effort to control population growth and even further rise in the cost of public services, the suburb is characterized by the most stringent residential zoning restrictions to be found anywhere. For instance, in New England I can think of towns such as Sudbury, Wayland, and Avon in Massachusetts with minimum zoning requirements of no less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 acres for a single family residence. Frequently developers, with the willing compliance of the town in which their parcels of land are being developed for residential purposes, restrict deeds to a $40,000 house or more. Actually such zoning restrictions make low cost housing uneconomical. In many sections of suburban America "acre zoning" is the common level.

-- All of these developments have produced a characteristic and particularly dangerous aspect of Suburbia -- that of comfortable homogeneity in each community. As contrasted with rural or urban communities, the suburb is likely to be composed of people of similar affluence, religion, race, ethnic origin, and cultural pattern. While this homogeneity may have come into being as a natural byproduct of the flight to the suburbs, one could safely add that it frequently becomes a self-conscious homogeneity which appears to be defensive and discriminatory.

-- To be sure not all suburbs are affluent, and in this respect my title is perhaps somewhat an exaggeration and an inaccuracy. Most suburbs, however, in one way or another, and in degree, can be characterized as follows: They are homogeneous. They are removed from the physical and social urliness of urban life. They are characterized by public services which are usually better than the metropolitan centers of which they are satellites. They preserve perhaps more than anywhere else traditional values of the Establishment.

It is in this frame of reference that I refer to them as the affluent ghetto.

The most cataclysmic change facing Suburbia today was suggested to me by The Honorable John F. Collins, a former mayor of Boston, now Visiting Professor for Urban Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This is his feeling of considerable certainty that the structure of zoning regulations which protects most suburban communities may soon be declared discriminatory by the courts and may not be permitted to exist. Expressed in a simple illustration, a suburban community which, through zoning regulations, requires an acre or two acres or three acres of expensive land as minimal for a single residence, or a deed restriction which requires that a residence costing no less than $40,000 or $50,000 or $60,000 be built on a given parcel of land says, in effect: "The poor are not allowed to live here" or "Negroes are not permitted as residents." It is known that a number of national organizations interested in the poor and in the Negro are preparing to face the courts on this issue and are collecting a series of carefully chosen test cases which can be brought before the courts for decision.

An effective attack on suburban zoning of this kind would pull down the walls that surround the suburb in a hurry. It would not only revolutionize suburban planning in any given community but it would also change the nature of most suburbs completely -- especially the more affluent ones -- in terms of the kinds and numbers of people who will live there and the kind of community that they will need and want. I should like to look into this a little further and I hope that you will bear with a few statistics.

Ipswich, Massachusetts, a middle class suburb about 20 miles from Boston had a population of about 8,500 in 1960. A reputable firm of engineering consultants employed by the town estimated its growth for 1980 at no greater than 14,000. Avon, Massachusetts, a little below Ipswich in affluence had a population of slightly more than 4,000 in 1960 and engineering consultants have estimated that at most it would grow to 9,000 in 1980. Dover, Massachusetts, also near Boston, had a population of 3,000 in 1960, and the consultant engineers retained by this extremely affluent town estimate a top of 12,500 by 1990. But the statistics of population density of these three towns are the significant ones for our purposes: Ipswich has a population density of 256 per square mile; Avon, 989 per square mile; and Dover 188 per square mile. Their parent city of Boston has a population density of no less than 14,273 persons per square mile!

If you can bear these statistics in mind -- the density statistics are enough -- one can readily see what will happen if zoning and other land restrictions, which protect the suburb now, are removed. Suburban populations will triple, quadruple, quintuple and so on very quickly. The homogeneity that so many suburbs enjoy, if enjoy is the right word, will give way to people in the poverty bracket, to Negroes, to all varieties of ethnic and economic and religious types. With this varied influx, the suburbs will inherit not only the problems of the city but such problems will be compounded in their assimilation with their very special suburban milieu. Finally, the population projections which have been prepared at considerable cost and with great care by specialists for each community will go out the window in a confusion that will only be contained when the suburb realizes that it is part of the entire national fabric and must plan its future course within the context of the mainstream of American life. The walls of the affluent ghetto will have been torn down.

The implications for libraries of these demographic, social, and cultural changes in the suburb are considerable. As I hope the foregoing may indicate, life for the suburban librarian will be infinitely more complex in serving a larger and varied constituency. With the shelter of the middle class establishment gone, the suburban public library will survive only on quite different terms than it does now. I should like to examine a few of the problems which I think are to be faced.

First, I am quite sure that the survival of the suburban library as an educational, recreational, informational, and, if you like, cultural institution will only occur with a creative, innovative drive which must, I am convinced, derive from the professional librarian. As William R. Monat said in reporting his study of "The Community Library: Its Search for a Vital Purpose" in the American Library Association Bulletin of December, 1967, "The consumer, or the community, will not automatically generate an agenda

of new and untried services."[1] In an earlier statement in the same report Monat said "It would be reassuring to report that .... the public library was viewed as a major and indispensable institution. Unfortunately, our soundings of the community and government leaders including library board members do not warrant this happy conclusion. No one openly opposed library services; everyone spoke well of the community library. However, in many ways these sentiments and attitudes refer to the public library as an institution -- a civic ornament -- not as a service agency."[2] Kenneth Beasely, in a study of governmental and financial problems of urban areas will need to be supplemented and/or supplanted by other stronger agencies.

On this Dr. Beasely says: "American democratic beliefs have traditionally included a concept that members of the lay public can and should make the decisions on public policies, and until approximately the 1930's it was assumed that any citizen of normal intelligence could administer in the public interest. Increasingly, however, dissatisfaction is expressed about this organizational scheme, and some basic and embarrassing questions are being posed. One is whether board members for certain service are sufficiently knowledgeable about it to say that they actually control the program and second, whether they are sufficiently responsible to the public. In numerous instances, the answer is no to both questions." Finally, he comments: "One group of political scientists, public administrators, laymen, and legislative leaders argue strongly that the use of independent boards and taxing districts must be reduced and a more direct line established to the electorate through a local or state legislative body."[4]

The all too frequent impotence of the Board of Trustees in securing adequate financial support is readily visible in the financial plight of libraries today and for as far back as one cares to look. This is especially true of the smaller suburban library as contrasted to the large metropolitan library, for in the urban situation the library can marshall the impact of the vested interest of powerful educational institutions, business and industry, and probably also a much more enlightened roster of government officials. In the suburb the library is in a much less visible position and by and large lacks this kind of support. Those who really need good library services will go to the city if they do not find it in the satellite. A strong argument can be made toward bringing the library into line as a municipal department with other strengths deriving from federal and state standards for resources and services, and, perhaps most important, a more powerful and insistent voice in its behalf from the regional system of which it is a part.

And now I would like to say a word about censorship and demagoguery as the suburban library must increasingly face them and probably very soon. Intellectual freedom -- the right to read -- or whatever one wishes to call it may face its severest test in the suburb. The rural library will be protected in large part by the homogeneity of its population, and the urban library, in turn, will find at least some protection in the powerful lineup of partisans and supporters that I mentioned earlier. The suburban library, however, may be expected to bear the impact of censorship with the fullest force and as things stand now, when this happens, the librarian usually stands alone. Too frequently he does not receive adequate backing from his trustees and almost as frequently, because their jobs are at stake, support from the library staff is passive. While we may wave the flag and shout the necessity of freedom to read as the very basis of public library existence and service, in 1968 the public library -- especially the suburban library -- is already on precarious ground.

At the beginning of this article I mentioned our changing moral and social -- even religious -- attitudes towards sex resulting in the general permissiveness towards sex and other controversial areas including politics and religion that has characterized the last decade or so. Frank Kermode in "'Obscenity' and the 'Public Interest'" this year stated: "In a period of inattentiveness, such as American letters is at present enjoying, the gap between the public widens very rapidly." He adds: "All liberalizing legislation would come to an end if tested by plebiscite; reforms relating to capital punishment, homosexuality, and abortion are brought about in part by the skill and persistence of their supporters, in part by that same inattentiveness on the part of the general public which has allowed certain books to be published which would never have survived the ordeal of the courts." Finally he adds: "In fact an obscenity trial, which is, as I have maintained, a struggle between the culture and one of its subcultures is transformed by the rules of law into something that resembles the real social issue about as much as chess resembles war."[5]

The period of "inattentiveness" which Mr. Kermode refers to, seems to be rapidly coming to a close. Our President Elect apparently was able to make telling use in his campaign of his promises to rid the country of "dirty literature" and "pornography" and, with no disrespect to his future office, I must say that in view of his known capacities in this area of intellectual concern, I cannot look forward to the implementation of his campaign promises as they will affect writing, publishing, and public and school libraries. We have a strong movement in the Congress to limit the appellate role of the Supreme Court in cases involving obscenity and pornography, and limiting the ultimate appeal of such cases to the state level -- a trend that is almost too unbearable to contemplate.

As I move about the country -- indeed as I sit in my office in Boston -- intolerance and censorship as they affect public libraries are more and more a day by day occurrence. Not long ago a chief of police in a suburban Boston town which can be said to have one of the best small libraries in the country, effectively prohibited the showing of three movies, one of which, curiously enough, was presented a few weeks later at the convention of the New England Library Association as an especially significant film of its kind. In another suburb just a few miles away a high school student was arrested, roughed up, and handcuffed by the police when he repeated a line or two in a LeRoi Jones play which had been presented by a traveling company in his high school auditorium under school auspices. Later when the local public library offered its auditorium for the play in question, it was enjoined from doing so "as a matter of public safety." Surely we can expect the end of the permissiveness which publishers, writers, libraries, and, most important of all, readers have enjoyed and there is good reason to believe that we may face another period of McCarthyism -- Joe, not Gene -- that is. It will of course be the writers, publishers, and distributers who will face the courts in legal censorship, though we in libraries will face the results of the laws and of court interpretations in trying to do our job. But make no mistake about it, the confrontation of the public library will be made largely by police intimidation with full use of direct threat to the library, personal intimidation of the librarian, and the use of innuendo and suspicion to discredit.

In speaking about library censorship let me be crystal clear that I am not talking about what we commonly call the "controversial book." Nor am I speaking necessarily about the kinds of "underground" books and periodicals which "turn on" the young adult and which he buys for himself if he cannot find them in his public library. Rather I am speaking of books and periodicals of indisputable scholarship and substance.

Let me use two illustrations from hundreds of others which would serve as well. TDR: The Drama Review formerly published by Tulane University and now published by the School of the Arts of New York University, is unique as a serious and scholarly periodical dealing with the contemporary theatre. The Fall 1968 issue contained, for instance, contributions by Jerzy Grotowski, Director of the Polish Theatre Laboratory whose company will visit the United States; articles by Eric Bentley, by Fernando Arrabal, one of France's most widely produced playwrights, Jan Kott, visiting professor at Berkeley last year and at Yale this year, and so on. The cover of this issue of TDR is a photograph of a "Happening" by Jean-Jacques Lebel, in the form of a quite nude girl receiving what appears to be a communion wafer from an outstretched hand. Inside, the issue carries a considerable number of photographs of the sex act including deviant variations, nudes aplenty, and a burlesqued enlargement of a phallus.

The September issue of Films and Filming, one of the Seven Arts collection of periodicals issued by Hansom Books in London, carries a large photograph on its cover from the film Two Gentlemen Sharing picturing a young white male voluptuously kissing a young Negro male. (The film, incidentally, does not deal with a homosexual theme.)

Here are current issues of two quite respectable periodicals each authoritative in its field. I would hope that both periodicals would be represented on the subscription lists of most public libraries. It is my best judgment, however, that any suburban library which places these on their current periodicals rack is inviting great trouble.

I would reiterate that the librarian stands alone in the suburb with all too frequently token if any support at all from intimidated or uninvolved trustees and staff. A few in his community will speak out but because they are the ones who always can be expected to react to issues of civil liberty, their impact will not be great. Those who support the demagogue, the censor, the police department, will speak out loudly, and compared with those on the other side, their numbers will be larger. In between is what I believe Edmond Burke terms the "silent majority" who simply look on as things happen. As Burke pointed out it is the silent majority that is the greatest and gravest problem of any free government or society.

If my fears are borne out, where is the strength and the support for freedom to read to come from. Not from our library associations, national, regional or state, I am sure, for they have been notoriously slow to act, ultra-conservative when they have acted at all, and in every instance that has come to my attention they have been ineffective. Organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union now play the most constructive role of any in supporting the local library as it faces censorship, and hopefully their roles will broaden as the problem unfolds. But it is particularly appropriate on this occasion for me to suggest a new kind of strength and support to protect the suburban library from censorship and this lies in

the great potentiality of the regional library system. We have been a long time bringing regional library services into existence, and with no wish to denigrate or criticize, it seems to me that at this point the role of the system is largely in exploiting interlibrary loan activities, in inter-library communication, in equalizing library financial support, and in overall guidance and planning in terms of a viable population and geographical area sufficient to support good service.

The potential of the regional library system in protecting its member libraries from the intrusions of the censor seem to me limitless and the most formidable kind of protection possible. With the eruption of a situation in one library, the organization of libraries about it could readily assess the facts, engage legal protection and advice, bring the full impact of lay as well as library leadership upon the community in trouble. This would call for expertise, but it need not call for great financial outlay. It would call for planning and organization in anticipation of difficulties, but it would not, since it would be a collective action, require individual self-sacrifice. It would have the impact and authority deriving from the near-by area that no state or national association could provide. It could not be ignored and, because of its local nature, it would enjoy the fullest exploitation by mass media. Quite aside from its protection of the right of free access to material in our public libraries this responsibility would give the regional library system a new dimension of importance and respect.

One final problem, and this is the role of the suburban library to the students in its constituency. The federal government and many state governments are pouring vast sums of money into school libraries -- or perhaps I should say "media centers" -- and for a variety of reasons, I feel sure that, however federal funds may be cut elsewhere, school libraries will continue to be strengthened and enlarged. Because of its relative smallness it appears that a collision course between the suburban library in competition with school libraries is near. While the school library, through our traditional faith in public education, will continue to thrive and enlarge, it may do so at the expense of the public library, unless the distinctive roles and services of these two kinds of libraries can be expressed in more convincing terms of public purpose than we use now. As we approach the collision, which I see as inevitable, the public library enjoys certain advantages which I hope it will carefully preserve.

Our public school systems long ago accepted the role and responsibility to serve <u>in loco parentis</u>. And as all of us who have visited schools know, the student is scheduled, watched over, signed in, signed out, is policed in every way every minute of the school day. His dress is prescribed: he must wear a necktie, skirts may not be too short, hair may not be too long. The books on the school library shelves all too often would bear the scrutiny of the particular prejudices of any and every parent. Not long ago when I was accused as a library educator of being prejudiced against school librarianship I replied that in my early years I had been a bit of a specialist in setting up and reorganizing prison libraries, and I said that I had yet to see a school library today at the junior or high school level that was not more intolerably restrictive than the prison libraries I remembered in the 1930's at Michigan City, Joliet, and in some of the other institutions of similar note hereabouts where I was working.

On the other hand, the public library, in spite of frequent outcries about the "student problem" has tended to treat the student on his own terms as a potential adult, and I hope it continues to do so. Not long ago I was surveying a town so well known for the general excellence of its public services that its name would be known to almost all of you. I found in sampling a group of high school students that while they used the school library, an excellent one, about once a month, on average they used the public library two and one-half times each week, and this made me curious. I received several answers to the question why. In the high school library if the student wanted a cigarette, this was unthinkable; if he wanted a "coke" and to relax with friends, this was also unthinkable; if he wanted to communicate with his friends in the school library even at the whisper level, he was discouraged with alacrity. Finally, I remember one charming young fellow who pointed out that to get to the school library at all one had to have a pass signed by a home room teacher, countersigned by an academic teacher, and this document, together with a blue identification card, had to be surrendered at the library entrance. Any student who could not produce such documents could not get in. The chap who was recounting all of this looked at me with a twinkle and said, "You know, Professor Shaffer, we're thinking of marching in a body to the high school steps to burn our blue I.D. cards."

We have preserved an adult permissiveness in our public libraries that encourages young people. If they want a cigarette they can go outside and smoke or go into the smoking room in many libraries. If they want a coke, they can walk down the street. If they have something to talk about with their friends, as long as they keep their voices within reasonable limits they are usually permitted to do so. It has been the tradition of the American public library that when a boy or girl is ready to leave the children's department he should be warmly invited, perhaps with his parents' permission or knowledge, to use the general collections of the library on adult terms. We must expect young people to be more exuberant than the older citizen, and we should welcome this exuberance and structure our buildings and services to provide as warm a welcome for the teenager as for the child or the adult.

I should like to emphasize one other aspect of the suburban library in connection with the teenager which we as librarians tend to de-emphasize if not to denigrate. This is the importance, or at least the potential importance, of the recreational role of the public library. The suburban community may be only a few miles from its great metropolitan base and for many, it is a simple matter to jump into a car and go into the city for dinner, the theater, a concert, or whatever form of recreation is preferred. But for the very young, including the teenager, or the older citizen, the distance to the city might as well be hundreds of miles, and for these, the year around recreational facilities of most suburban communities are frequently nil. It is natural for the teenager to be gregarious, to seek recreation, and if recreational opportunity is not provided in an exciting but wholesome kind of way, he will surely find it but perhaps in unwholesome terms, and we all know that this happens. We librarians, I think, miss the boat in emphasizing the educational and informational services of the library although these are not inconsiderable. In the suburban community with limited recreational opportunity, the library should be and can be "the most exciting place in town."

If the expectations for this paper were in more traditional terms of the possibilities of library automation, inter-library cooperation, recruitment and professional education of library personnel, and other topics that are dealt with month by month in the library press, you will have been disappointed. The thesis which I have tried to develop is a crisis in the structure of the suburb, which if it occurs along the lines of this paper, will call for an absolute rethinking of suburban planning in larger and in different terms, and just as surely it will call for a new and enlarged dimension of public library resources and services. The crisis of rural America was allowed to reach the level of catastrophe before we began to deal with it in terms of a constructive solution. It must be clear to us all that we allowed our cities to decay physically and morally to a point where many despair that their reconstruction may be possible at all. If suburban America is destined to be the next stage for social and moral convulsion, let us anticipate it now. Let us, as librarians, begin to develop the resources and the new techniques of service to serve communities which will be greater and greater in size and heterogeneous in kind. Let us begin now.

FOOTNOTES

1. Monat, William R. "The Community Library; Its Search for a Vital Purpose." A.L.A. Bulletin. 61: 1309. Dec. 1967.

2. Ibid. p. 1304.

3. Beasley, Kenneth "Governmental and Financial Problems of Urban Areas; Their Relationship to Libraries." Library Quarterly. 38: 15-16. Jan. 1968.

4. Ibid. p. 17.

5. Kermode, Frank " 'Obscenity' and the 'Public Interest' " In New American Review No. 3. The New American Library, Inc. 1968. pp. 241-3.

REACTION TO PROFESSOR SHAFFER'S SPEECH
BY ARTHUR CURLEY AND PETER HIATT

Mr. Curley:

I would like to make the program more exciting by disagreeing with Professor Shaffer, but I cannot. I support his entire thesis.

He has depicted for us a very accurate picture of the eve of a social revolution in the American suburb. I do not feel, however, that he has given us a pessimistic view. Perhaps one of the most negative elements in the suburb is its homogeneity. I look forward to seeing the restrictive walls around the suburb come tumbling down. All of us will be better for it.

What Professor Shaffer has described is a situation in our country that was reflected in the recent elections. We are at that point at which the forces of progress and the forces of conservatism are in a state of violent confrontation. In New York City, where I live, we have recently seen the real threat of the failure to resolve this tension, a threat that the very fabric of our society will be torn apart. It is only a matter of time until this situation spreads to the suburbs.

How does all of this relate to libraries? The time is not very far in the past when many of us would have wondered what libraries have to do with such matters. Libraries have a very important role to play in the resolution of this tension as an institution which uniquely embodies both conservative and progressive functions. The library is a symbol of belief in the ability of our society to surmount its problems.

The library is a conservator of the past, but it is also a social institution, an educational institution, and as such a vehicle of social change. This puts a particular responsibility upon the public library. Is the suburban public library maintaining a balance between the forces of conservatism and the forces of change? Is it actively seeking a role as a forum of ideas on controversial social issues, or is it in hiding?

A public library is a bridge between people and ideas. It is the diversity of ideas--access to the diversity of ideas--that is essential to the role of the public library. The library cannot represent only the status-quo. The library must represent not only the community as it is today, but the community as it might become tomorrow. For the public library to become a truly viable social and educational institution, we have to realize that the improvement of library service is not exclusively an internal matter, streamlining processing and circulation, but largely an external matter: establishing a meaningful relationship between the library and the broader social picture.

I take issue with what I think is a fallacy in much of the planning of library services in this country, particularly in small public libraries. That fallacy is the notion that the library's chief responsibility is somehow to "reflect its community". This too often is interpreted as justification for representing only those points of view which conform to established opinions in that community. I think that the greatest needs of a community are perhaps those

needs which the community itself is least able to express - specifically, the need for change itself and access to an unrestricted wealth of ideas, including radical and locally unpopular ideas, which are the tools of change.

The library has to be on the side of diversity. I think it has to be on the side of diversity in many ways, in its collections, of course, but in its staff as well. I think that you should be able to walk into a public library and find a staff that is dynamic, intellectually alive, concerned with more than just keeping shop. Racial integration of suburban library staffs is an urgent necessity - before, not just after, the community itself has attained heterogeneity.

How should suburban libraries begin to address themselves to the problems which have been pointed out in Professor Shaffer's remarks? You have already started by focusing your attention at this seminar upon the role of the library as a social institution. An approach to social problems on a system-wide basis is the best hope of the public library for social relevance. Analysis is basic to effective programs of action, and analysis is something that can best be done on a system level.

Professor Shaffer's comments on the matter of censorship are particularly apt. Censorship is something that we too often talk about as an isolated problem. As though it is something that hits the library, without necessarily affecting the community. Censorship is a symbol of the intolerance that is an outgrowth of the coercive homogeneity of our suburban communities. A system-wide attack upon censorship is one of the greatest services that a system could perform.

Professor Shaffer said that the public library is going to have to recognize its inter-relationship with other governmental bodies. The organization of a system is the greatest insurance against the library being swallowed up by a large multipurpose governmental agency. The library system is also a strong centripetal counterforce to the centrifugal tendency which occurs in the diversity of governmental bodies found in the suburban area today. And the development of informational resources upon which other governmental bodies will come to depend can do much to secure a healthy position for the public library in the increasingly competitive governmental picture.

Dr. Hiatt:

"Suburbia is our next area of crisis." I would like to respond to three aspects of this crisis as they relate to public libraries: first, the survival of the public library as an institution; second, the issue of intellectual freedom; and third, the changing role of the public library.

The key question raised by Dean Shaffer is that of the survival of our public library. "The indispensable institution" is one of the phrases that he used. Is the public library indeed indispensable?

Economists who are participating in the Indiana Library Studies are telling us things which are true not only in Indiana but also nationally. Public libraries should not expect increasing tax support nor even status-quo tax support, but probably should expect decreasing tax support. An indication of what could happen to libraries was the December 1968 closing of the Youngstown, Ohio public schools, where the citizens would not pay more school taxes. Since that time, other school systems have faced similar financial crises. This is a trend, a portent of things to come. The imprtance of a wider tax base supporting local institutions is very, very real. The regional concept of the North Suburban Library System represents one solution.

It's possible that we've been doing too many things for too long, all of them at a mediocre level. Shall the public library choose among the traditional objectives of recreation, information and education? Can society afford to use the public library as a recreational instrument, or can recreational needs be met more effectively and less expensively elsewhere? Is information service the key to institutional success? We see commercial information firms successfully competing with us. Can we reach people in the ghetto area through their information needs? Or do we need to revitalize our adult education function? We have talked about adult education in public libraries for a century. The evidence of success is very slim. But I would suggest that continuing education must become our primary objective.

But in regard to political control, were you upset when Mr. Shaffer questioned the role of the Board of Trustees? The Board of Trustees can be effective in identifying community needs and in creating policies to meet these needs. If you are a trustee, look at your fellow trustees; if you are a librarian, look at your Board. Ask, "Do these people represent my community, or rather, do they represent a very small segment of my community?"

Competition with school libraries is another issue which Mr. Shaffer raised. This is both an economic and a political issue. Before long public libraries will be competing with school libraries for a decreasingly available tax dollar. The Board of Trustees will have an increasingly political role. Where, say fifteen years ago, many boards could wait until other city agency budgets were met and then accept the remaining funds for the library. Today and increasingly in the future, the Board must enter the political arena to fight for library support. Invariably, and inevitably the question arises, "Why both school and public libraries?" The customary answers are convincing to neither librarians or non-librarians, and this question deserves much more serious thought.

Mr. Shaffer raises the spectre of suburban censorship. Isn't intellectual freedom what libraries are all about? Isn't a basic purpose of the public

library to stimulate people to want to explore all sides of an issue? I think it is.

Mr. Shaffer claims McCarthyism is returning. Growing evidence clearly supports his contention. We're living in a complex world, which is getting more complex. Many people ask, "Couldn't we just turn the clock back to simpler times?" Unfortunately, we cannot turn the clock back. One of the reactions to this complexity is a quest for simple answers. Unfortunately, there are no simple answers. One of the reasons for George Wallace's popularity is his giving of very simple answers to very complex questions.

Finally, Mr. Shaffer comments on the comfortable homogeneity of the suburbs. Is what he said true of your public? Of your library? Indeed, of NSLS? How does this comfortable homogeneity affect the role of the public library?

"The walls of isolation are now being built around suburbia. You are keeping your eyes closed to social and economic revolution about you. We must not pretend that the inner city is not our problem; it is definitely the problem of suburbia."

Most of you are familiar with the Kerner report.[1] It identifies three ways to take care of the unemployment problem in the inner city. The first possibility is to bring industry into the city. The report rejects this as being unfeasible at present. The second is to change housing regulations in suburbia so that Negroes can move out of the urban ghettos. The third and cheapest possibility is to create better transportation systems so that the unemployed, low educated Negro can get to where the jobs are. The consequences of this third suggestion are obvious. When you start transporting people to where the jobs are, soon they start settling there.

In his remarks, Mr. Curley talked about the public library's role as a bridge. The public library is a catalyst, perhaps, or a stimulator, but not a passive bridge. The public library is a change agent. We want to change people. We assume that with information the individual or the community will improve. The North Suburban Library System can ply a vital role in stimulating people to prepare themselves to participate in and accept societal change. Finally, NSLS must help its communities plan for these changes which we now anticipate.

The role of libraries in community planning is an important one. Libraries will be playing a far more crucial part in planning than they have in the past. If the key question that Mr. Shaffer is raising is that of the survival of our institution, then he is really talking about our failures, or at least our incipient failures. If he is correct then we must shift our focus from the institution to people. Society has created our institution and we have educated ourselves so that we may serve people. With the suburb's resources, especially its intellectual resources, suburbia's response, whether active or passive, may very well shape our country's future. The public library should help shape this response.

[1] Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder. (Available from the Government Printing Office, or in a paperback edition, Bantam, 1968.)

Question Period*

Question: Do you think we have sold the majority of the public on the idea of intellectual freedom or are we librarians in the minority in believing in it?

Mr. Shaffer: Although this is one of the primary responsibilities of the American public library, we have failed, absolutely to sell the public on the idea of intellectual freedom. We have never realized intellectual freedom as a social concept. We have never even effectively raised the issue in any kind of national way. W thout challenge, without pressure, we librarians are avoiding the kinds of material that might get us into trouble. Mr. Curley, as the director of a public library, said that t librarian is alone. He has no help from his neighbors because for the most part, these libraries don't have the volume that's causing the trouble; they've avoided it."

Question: Don't you think this is changing? Aren't the activities of the California Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee in educating the general public in regard to intellectual freedom an example of a trend?

Mr. Curley: What's happening in California is, of course, a step in the right direction. We still are seeing censorship in a much narrower and specific way. Censorship is not just a matter of specific items. It is a very subtle, very pervasive thing. The suburbs are homogeneous, and the libraries' viewpoints tend to respond to this homogeneity. The library increasingly reflects the community more than it reflects the intellectual and cultural values to which the community should aspire.

Dr. Hiatt: I don't think public libraries have done an effective job yet. Libraries have tried very hard to convince people that they need information to make decisions. Our successes are limited. If we don't succeed in convincing people that they need information to make a decision, then the idea of intellectual freedom is meaningless.

Question: I'm not one who believes in the coming dissolution of the public library, but I do agree with our panel that we need to establish some priorities in this regard. I'm interested in a suggestion as what the NSLS can do in the area of research to help us decide what are the essential things in our profession?

Mr. Curley: Dr. Freud put it best. Once you have analyzed the problem you can begin to deal with it. Analysis is something that cannot be done in a piecemeal way. It can be done in a professional way. This, I think, is this System's first order of business.

Question: Are today's speakers suggesting that public libraries reorient and actually foster change -- actually take stands on social issues rather than merely supplying information?

* A composite record of the question periods at the Evanston Public Library and at the Libertyville Township (Cook Memorial)Public Library.

Dr. Hiatt: The public library was first created to foster change. The library has been referred to as a change agent, and this is most apt. Society created the public library more than a hundred years ago because an institution was needed to foster continuing education, to help people improve themselves. In other words, in a real sense the creation of the public library was in itself a social stand, a belief that people could improve through continuing education. In the past century, library leadership has recognized the need to stimulate interest in change both among individuals and in communities. Whether it is an individual making a wiser decision, a company altering its product, or a community working on a program of planned improvement, the public library is not simply the repository of information for such decisions, but can be the initiator of change. I would argue, then, that the question of public libraries reorienting themselves to foster change is meaningless. The institution was created specifically to foster change whether indivisual or societal.

With highly educated staff, a tremendous store of information, and its community perspecitive, the public library is often the first agency in a community to identify a problem which needs discussion. Mr. Shaffer has outlined such problems for us. It is clear your public library has an opportunity for a leadership role. "Merely supplying information" is not enough.

Mr. Curley: I do not foresee a situation in which individual libraries -- or individual librarians -- will take strong public stands. While we may aim at impartiality as an ideal, none of us is impartial, I expect that in a public issue we'd have as many on one side as on the other, and thus we'd neutralize ourselves. I do see libraries and librarians collectively, in a group such as the ALA, working toward stands on things, for example, on intellectual freedom. Certainly in the matter of intellectual freedom the library cannot be impartial. I think that the public library in this country today is a white, middle class institution. I think that the library has and still does represent the status quo. I do not think that the library should attempt to bring about social change. I think the library should recognize social change is inevitable and that the library should, rather than encourage social change, simply get out of the business of trying to stop social change.

Mr. Shaffer: I'd like to illustrate Mr. Curley's remark on the library's white, middle class aspect. We're dealing at S mmons and at most of the other library schools with a very interesting, and at the same time frustrating and tragic problem. Almost every one of the great public metropolitan libraries is coming to us and saying, "We are going to have to close this branch in a Negro neighborhood; we're going to have to close this bookmobile service in a Negro neighborhood unless we can provide Negro personnel to operate them." And these Negro personnel do not exist.

CONTRIBUTORS

Kenneth R. Shaffer: Director, School of Library Science, Professor and Director of Libraries, Simmons College, Boston. Born Indianapolis. A.B., Butler University and B.S. in L.S., University of Illinois. Formerly Order Librarian, Indiana State Library; Instructor, University of Illinois; Assistant Director, Indiana University Libraries; and Director, American Book Center for War Devastated Libraries. His publications include 25 Short Cases In Library Personnel Administration, 25 Cases In Executive - Trustee Relationship, The Book Collection, and Library Personnel Administration and Library Personnel Administration and Supervision. Dean Shaffer served as Consultant, Peace Corps, and for the U.S. Department of State.

Arthur V. Curley: Director, Montclair, New Jersey, Public Library. Born Boston. B.A., Harvard University, and M.S. in L.S., Simmons College. Formerly Adult Worker, Boston Public Library; Librarian, Avon, Massachusetts, Public Library; and Librarian, Palatine, Illinois, Public Library. He has contributed to professional literature and edited with Dorothy Nyren Curley, Modern Romance Literatures.

Peter Hiatt: Associate Professor, Graduate Library School, University of Indiana and Public Library Consultant, Indiana State Library. Born New York City. B.A., Colgate University, M.L.S. and Ph.D., Rutgers University. Formerly Trainee and Branch Librarian, Elizabeth, New Jersey, Public Library; and Instructor, Rutgers University. His publications include Public Library Services for the Functionally Illiterate and library surveys of Monroe County, Indiana, Public Library and Delaware County, Indiana. Dr. Hiatt is serving as Director of the Indiana Library Studies.

END

DEPT. OF HEALTH

EDUCATION AND

WELFARE

U.S. OFFICE OF

EDUCATION

ERIC

DATE FILMED

2-19-70